

DACA, I am sorry to say, is not a popular program with many of my Republican colleagues. They have tried to shut it down. They want to deport these DREAMers—2½ million young people who were brought to the United States as infants and children, who have grown up in this country, have no serious criminal record, and who only want to be part of our future. Instead, the critics say, turn them away, deport them—many times to countries they cannot even remember.

A year ago this week, President Obama established a new program that built on DACA's success. It is called the Deferred Action for Parental Accountability, or DAPA. Under that program, undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States for more than 5 years and have American children would be required to come forward, register with the government, pay a fee, submit themselves to a criminal and national security background check, and pay their fair share of taxes. This is potentially 11 million people. Are we safer as a nation if these 11 million—or a large part of them—come forward, register with the government, pay their taxes, and submit themselves to a criminal background check? If they have a serious problem, if they have committed a crime, out they go. I am not going to defend them. But let's give these people a chance to get temporary status in this country by paying their taxes, paying a fee, submitting to a background check, and registering with our government. If the government determines these parents haven't committed any serious crimes and don't pose any threat to us, the President's order, on a temporary basis, says they can work and will not be deported—temporary.

President Obama also expanded this to cover all DREAMers who came to the United States as children and have lived here for at least 5 years. Why did he take these actions? Because for years Congress has failed to fix our broken immigration system.

I remember the day—it was June 27, 2013, 2½ years ago—the Senate passed comprehensive legislation to fix our broken immigration system. The vote was 68 to 32. A substantial number of Republican Senators joined with Democrats in voting for this comprehensive reform. We had spent, eight of us—the group of 8, as we were called—months negotiating back and forth and back and forth on the toughest issues involving immigration. We reached a bipartisan agreement, brought the bill to the floor, and it passed. We were in the majority at that time on the Democratic side, but we reached across the aisle to make sure enough Republicans could support us so that we could have a bipartisan solution to our immigration challenge.

Unfortunately, the Republican majority in the House of Representatives at that time would not even consider—wouldn't even consider—the immigration reform bill we passed. In the face

of that, the President had no choice. He could allow our broken immigration system to continue or step forward and try to make America safer and more just.

The Center for American Progress, incidentally, says the economic benefit of the President's Executive orders would have been significant. Both DACA for children and DAPA for their parents would increase my State's gross domestic product by almost \$15 billion over 10 years and increase the earnings of all Illinois residents by almost \$8 billion.

Unfortunately, both DAPA and the expansion of the earlier DACA have been blocked by lawsuits that have been filed by Republicans who oppose the measure. These Republicans, who have the majority in the House and Senate, refuse to even consider any legislation to fix our broken immigration system.

Well, last week, in a decision that was no surprise, a Republican-appointed judge—actually, a bank of judges on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals—sided with the Republicans who had filed a lawsuit and upheld an injunction that blocks DAPA and the expanded DACA Program. The Obama administration announced they will appeal to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has been clear in the past that Presidents have the authority to set Federal immigration policy. I believe the President's actions will ultimately be upheld.

Over the years, I have come to the floor more than 60 times to tell stories about DREAMers. I used to give speeches about the general issue, and people didn't pay much attention. But then I started telling the stories of the actual people who would be affected by the DREAM Act and by DACA. Today, I want to tell you another one.

This is Fernando Meza Gutierrez. Fernando's family came to the United States from Mexico when he was 9 years old. He grew up in Los Angeles, CA, and he was an outstanding student. In high school, he was an advanced placement scholar, and he received an international baccalaureate diploma and the Achievement Award in Foreign Language for French. He was a student athletic trainer, president of the French club, and tutored his fellow students in French, Spanish, and in math.

Fernando was also active in his community. He volunteered at nursing homes, participated in canned food drives, beach cleanup, and Thanksgiving dinners for the homeless.

Fernando continued his studies at Santa Clara University. Remember, as an undocumented student, he didn't qualify for a penny in Federal assistance—no loans, no Pell grants. But at Santa Clara University, Fernando graduated cum laude with a double major in biology and French. During his time at Santa Clara, Fernando won the award for the best presentation in molecular biology at the West Coast Biological Sciences Undergraduate Re-

search Conference. He worked at a research laboratory, where he studied how cells choose what kind of tissue they will become during their development. Unlike the other students, Fernando could not be paid for his work because he was an undocumented immigrant.

Fernando also continued to be active in his community. He was a certified emergency medical technician, responding to on-campus medical emergencies. He participated in food drives, tutored high school students, worked with HIV patients in San Francisco, and volunteered for soup kitchens.

Fernando is currently a third-year doctoral student at the University of California in San Francisco, studying biochemistry and molecular biology. He is working in a lab in the Hellen Diller Comprehensive Cancer Center. He focuses his research on how cancer cells get rid of proteins that are defective and potentially harmful or proteins that are no longer needed. His work could provide valuable insights into many diseases and disorders, including cancer and autism. Fernando also mentors high school students and undergraduate students pursuing careers in biomedical science.

Fernando sent me a letter, and this is what he said:

I'm thankful to this country for giving me the opportunity to grow up in a safe environment, for the education I receive, for the amazing people that have been a part of my life, and for the culture in which I grew up. All these factors have shaped my world view, my aspirations. . . . DACA will allow me to contribute to America's biomedical research work and potentially make discoveries that could improve the lives of Americans and people around the world. This country has given me an opportunity to pursue my passion for biomedical research. In the future, I want to use my expertise to contribute to this country and to make sure that the United States remains the world's leader in biomedical discoveries.

Fernando and many DREAMers like him have a lot to contribute to America. I don't understand those who want to deport this young man, who say: We don't need you, we don't need your talents, we don't need your hard work, and we don't need your research. Of course we do. America will be a better country if Fernando becomes a part of its future. That is what the DREAM Act does. That is what DACA does. That is what we are trying to achieve.

Instead of trying to deport young men and women like Fernando, I hope the other party will support meaningful immigration reform that is fair and comprehensive.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.  
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:48 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, November 18, 2015, at 10 a.m.